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S/P

October 25, 1962

TO: The Secretary
The Under Secretary
G - The Deputy Under Secretary

THROUGH: S/S

FROM: S/P - W. W. Rostow

SUBJECT: Negotiations About Cuba.

As Counsclor I should like urgently to comment on the longer run implications of New York's 1453 of October 24, our 1085 of October 25, Djakarta 742 of October 25, in the light of our paper on the Cuban base problem in perspective.

As Macmillan said in Parliament, the Soviets are testing us. One part of that test concerned our will to take the risks of selective blockade and our ability to rally the DAS to this position.

The second equally important test is whether we are ceapable of holding to our position under the pressures of "world opinion."

In the ENSP draft it was universally agreed that one of our fundamental problems is to distinguish those occasions when we must be prepared to hold to vital decisions concerning national or Free World security from those where it is legitimate and proper to respond to external pressures, notably from the underdeveloped areas.

It is evident that the Soviets are now testing us on this second point.

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The Soviets are evidently trying now to achieve a negotiation in which they either hold on to what they have in Cuba by way of an offensive capability (to be beefed up by future clandestine delivery of vital components, including nuclear warheads) or trade off what they have against some Western asset, notably Turkish and Italian missiles. They are doing so against the general background of a massive build-up in their own nuclear capabilities and against a flat unwillingness to move on any serious measures of arms control.

We have created a bargaining lever against their Cuban build up in the form of the commitments we made in the President's speech and in the blockade itself. If we are to surrender the blockade before the question of the Cuban installations is settled, we are likely to be forced, unless great care is taken, into a deal which psychologically and politically, if not militarily, will weaken the Free World and the fiber of the Alliance.

We shall be suggesting, in the course of the day, ways of moving forward on the question of European missiles on a constructive track of our own choosing, which may conceivably play a useful background role in the evolution of this crisis; but I believe it is essential not to reward the Soviets -- or appear to reward the Soviets -- by letting these tracks get crossed.

I believe this point is not clear in the draft of the President's reply to the Secretary General; and, if we proceed on that line, it is essential that our instructions to Stevenson be absolutely lucid on this point.

More generally, I believe the exercise in New York dramatizes a dangerous tendency in the United Nations. Its instinct is always, in effect, to call for a ceasefire on the existing line. This tendency sets up a powerful

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incentive for the Soviets to engage in offensive actions and then to use against us the bargaining position they have attained as of the moment of ceasefire. The telegram from Djakarta indicates this is precisely what they intend to do in the present case. I find in the reference telegrams to and from New York an inadequate awareness of and defense against this dangerous technique.

Attachments

As stated in first paragraph.

Wu Roston: rd

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